

CD2002 --97/98

Friday, October 4, 2002, 8 p.m.
Walter Hall

Faculty of Music
Presents

FRED HERSCH

SOLO JAZZ PIANO CONCERT



A pianist and composer whose work has received nearly universal acclaim in a career spanning over twenty years, Fred Hersch is among the

foremost artists in the world of jazz today. Described as "a master who plays it his way" by *The New York Times*, "a poet of a pianist" by *The New Yorker* and "one of the small handful of brilliant musicians of his generation" by *Downbeat*, Hersch has released eighteen albums as a solo artist or bandleader, two of which were nominated for Grammy awards for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance; he has co-leased other twenty albums and has appeared as sideman or featured soloist on over eighty further recordings.

With the release from Nonesuch Records in 2001 of an unprecedented 3-

CD set of new mostly solo piano recordings, *Songs Without Words*, Hersch is taking his place as the most prolific and widely-praised solo jazz pianist of his generation. In this boxed set, Hersch puts his distinctive stamp on three groups of compositions: Volume One features a new set of six dazzling original solo piano pieces "Songs Without Words" as well as new takes on some Hersch's best-known compositions; Volume Two is a collection of classic tunes by great jazz composers including Mingus, Monk, Ellington, Gillespie and Shorter; and Volume Three contains re-workings of songs by Cole Porter. In an review of the set for *Jazziz*, Ed Hazell said, "Few jazz pianists have ever struck as beguiling a balance between technique, feeling, insight and imagination... Hersch's engagement with each of these songs is so complete that he evokes the sort of secret meanings words cannot." *Downbeat* critic Ted Panken called it a "document of a modern master—and

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the French Academie du Jazz honored "Songs Without Words" as their "Disc of the Year" for 2001.

His previous Nonesuch release was *Let Yourself Go*, an eclectic solo recital recorded live at Boston's famed Jordan Hall. Of this CD, the *Los Angeles Times* said: "There isn't a false note - technically or emotionally - in the album, a tribute to Hersch's unerring ability to play music that is as intelligent as it is touching, as virtuosic as it is swinging." He had previously released five solo piano CDs. One of these, *Thelonious: Fred Hersch Plays Monk* was called "a personal triumph of the first order" by *The Village Voice* and "a landmark album" by the *Washington Post*, sentiments echoed by critics worldwide; and another, *I Never Told You: Fred Hersch Plays Johnny Mandel*, earned Hersch his second Grammy nomination. He has given major solo concerts at the Montreal, San Francisco, Rome and London Jazz Festivals; at Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Spoleto USA and The Gilmore Keyboard Festival; in Boston, Seattle, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Herbst Theatre in San Francisco and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall; and throughout Europe.

Hersch has been widely recognized in recent years for his ability to re-invent the standard jazz repertoire, investigating time-tested classics and interpreting them with keen insight, fresh ideas and extraordinary technique. This has been the focus of his acclaimed series of "songbook" releases that focus on the work of a single composer. Since signing with Nonesuch Records 1996, Hersch has presented three such projects: *Passion Flower: Fred Hersch Plays Billy Strayhorn*, *Fred Hersch*

Plays Rodgers and Hammerstein and Thelonious: Fred Hersch Plays Monk. Others include *Evanessence: A Tribute to Bill Evans* that featured the Fred Hersch Trio and special guests Gary Burton and Toots Thielemans. Notable recent collaborative albums include *Focus*, the second CD by the collaborative trio *Thirteen Ways* (with clarinetist/alto saxophonist Michael Moore and drummer Gerry Hemingway), *Four in Perspective* (with legendary trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, vocalist Norma Winstone and percussionist Paul Clarvis), and the duo CD *Songs We Know* with guitar icon Bill Frisell.

When he first arrived in New York from his native Cincinnati in 1977, Hersch quickly became one of the most in-demand pianists in town. He has had long-time musical associations with such outstanding jazz artists as saxophonists Joe Henderson, Stan Getz and Jane Ira Bloom, flugelhornist Art Farmer, harmonica virtuoso Toots Thielemans, vibraphonist Gary Burton, bassists Sam Jones and Charlie Haden; and has also shared a sensitive rapport with such diverse vocalists as The Manhattan Transfer's Janis Siegel, jazz legend Andy Bey and soprano Dawn Upshaw. Since 1986, Hersch has led his own trio, giving voice to his own compositions as well as reinvigorating the standards. It has recorded seven trio albums and has appeared in major clubs and festivals worldwide including regular engagements at New York's legendary Village Vanguard; *The New Yorker* observes that the trio "specializes in high lyricism and high danger."

In recent years Hersch has become a visible and passionate spokesman and fund-raiser for AIDS research and relief

agencies. On behalf of Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS, he has produced and played on two albums: *Last Night When We Were Young: The Pallad Album*, which has raised over 150,000 for AIDS services and education; and *Fred Hersch & Friends: The Duo Album* on which he performed duets with 12 jazz greats including Tommy Flanagan, Joe Lovano, Diana Krall, Lee Konitz, and Jim Hall. The fall of 2001 saw the release of *The Richard Rodgers Centennial Jazz Piano Album*, a project produced by Hersch to benefit *Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS*; it features solo piano performances of classic Rodgers tunes donated by Kenny Barron, Bill Charlap, Benny Green, Marian McPartland, George Shearing and Hersch.

An honors graduate and longtime member of the jazz studies faculty of Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, Hersch's classical training is "apparent in the fluency of his articulation and the timbral variety he brings to his touch," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. He has had a two-piano partnership with concert pianist Jeffrey Kahane, has given duo concerts with violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and he has appeared as a soloist with orchestras in the U.S. and Europe including the Pittsburgh Symphony, Utah Symphony, Vermont Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, Toronto Sinfonietta, BBC Radio Orchestra (London), Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra (Hungary), Sinfonietta Caracas (Venezuela) and both the EOS Orchestra and Concordia Orchestra in New York City.

Hersch was the subject of a TV feature profile on *CBS Sunday Morning* with

Dr. Billy Taylor and has been featured on such popular National Public Radio programs as *Morning Edition*, *Fresh Air*, *Jazz From Lincoln Center* and *Jazz Set*; he has twice been Marian McPartland's guest on her long-running NPR series Piano Jazz. He is the recipient of grants from both The National Endowment for the Arts and Meet the Composer, is a four-time winner of a Gay and Lesbian American Music Award (GLAMA) and has been awarded three composition residencies at The MacDowell Colony, the prestigious artists' colony in Peterborough, NH. In 1999 a new Hersch dance score for "Out Someplace", commissioned by The Doris Duke Foundation/Millennium Project for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, was premiered at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

Upcoming in January of 2003 is the release of *The Fred Hersch Trio: Live at the Village Vanguard* on the Palmetto Records label, Hersch's first trio CD since 1995. It features compositions by Hersch, Monk and Shorter and showcases his new trio (Drew Gress, bass & Nasheet Waits, drums). *Songs & Lullabies*, a duo CD with vocalist Norma Winstone comprised of 11 compositions by Hersch with lyrics by Winstone (with guest Gary Burton on vibes), will be released in March on Sunnyside. And April will see the premiere of *Leaves of Grass*, Hersch's multi-media full-evening work inspired by the poetry of Walt Whitman for two voices (Kurt Elling and Norma Winstone) and an ensemble of eight instruments. His newest major solo piano composition, *24 Variations on a Bach Choral*, will receive its world premiere by Jeffrey Kahane in San Francisco in November, 2002.

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2002-2003

Jazz ^{at} THE FACULTY OF MUSIC

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October 5, 2002

MASTER CLASS WITH FRED HERSCH

2 pm. Walter Hall. Free

November 27, 2002

10 O'CLOCK AND 11 O'CLOCK JAZZ ORCHESTRAS

Paul Read & Phil Nimmons, directors

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$12, \$6(students/seniors)

November 29, 2002

VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE, LISA MARTINELLI DIRECTOR

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$12, \$6(students/seniors)

January 26, 2003

JAZZ FACULTY SHOWCASE - Sundays at the Bader

2:30 pm. Isabel Bader Theatre. \$20, \$10(students/seniors)

February 28, 2003

AMERICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK - Faculty Artist Series

Standards from the songbooks of Gershwin, Porter, Kern and others featuring **Lisa Martinelli** vocal, **Kevin Turcotte** trumpet, **David Braid** piano, **Pat Collins** bass.

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$20, \$10(students/seniors)

March 12, 2003

VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE, LISA MARTINELLI DIRECTOR

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$12, \$6(students/seniors)

April 2, 2003

11 O'CLOCK JAZZ ORCHESTRA, PHIL NIMMONS DIRECTOR

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$12, \$6(students/seniors)

April 9, 2003

10 O'CLOCK JAZZ ORCHESTRA, PAUL READ DIRECTOR

8 pm. Walter Hall. \$12, \$6(students/seniors)

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